For Immediate Release
August 29, 2012
For more information, contact Julie Henry, 919-855-4840
julie.henry@dhhs.nc.gov

DHHS Reports Five Cases of West Nile Virus in North Carolina
Residents Urged to Take Precautions to Prevent Exposure

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services reports that as of August 29, five cases of West Nile virus, including two deaths, have been reported in our state. Confirmed cases have been reported in Cabarrus, Forsyth, Mecklenburg, Scotland and Wayne counties.

State Health Director Laura Gerald urges residents and visitors to take precautions to prevent mosquito-borne illness, including regular use of insect repellant and eliminating potential breeding sites around homes and businesses.

"While the Division of Public Health has only confirmed cases of West Nile in these five counties, we want to encourage everyone to protect themselves, especially at this time of year, when mosquitoes are most active," Dr. Gerald said. "West Nile, and other mosquito-borne illness, can occur in any county in North Carolina."

Gerald added that about 80 percent of people infected with West Nile, or four out of five, will not show any symptoms at all. Approximately 1 in 5 people who are infected with West Nile virus will develop symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Less than 1 percent will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain or surrounding tissues).

As of August 28, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports that 48 states have reported West Nile virus infections in people, birds, or mosquitoes. A total of 1,590 cases of West Nile virus disease in people, including 66 deaths, have been reported to CDC.

For more information about preventing mosquito-borne illness, visit
http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/arbo.html

For information on the use of insect repellents with children please visit the AAP website:
http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Insect-Repellents.aspx".

####